

Section 1. (Amendments to the Claims)¹

Please amend claims 1 and 19 of the pending claims, as set out below.

The amendments of the claims are in the format proposed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for adoption in July, 2003 revising 37 C.F.R. §1.121, pursuant to the Notice published on February 25, 2003 at 1267 OG 106, accepting current submissions of amendments in such revised format.

The claims pending in the application are claims 1, 3-13, 16 and 19.

It is noted that the March 26, 2003 Office Action, in the PTO-326 form thereof, contained an error. Specifically, the PTO-326 form stated that claim 9 is "withdrawn from consideration." Such withdrawal of claim 9 is nowhere mentioned in the subsequent text of the Office Action, and, inconsistent with the statement of withdrawal on the PTO-326 form, the Examiner has considered claim 9 substantively on the merits, rejecting claims 1, 3-13, 16, and 19 on page 2 of the Office Action over Kopf '930 in view of Demmer et al. and/or Karbachsch.

Accordingly, the PTO-326 is in error.

The pending claims, as amended, are set out below.


1. (currently amended) ~~An integral gasketed filtration cassette structure comprising:~~

(a) a filtration cassette comprising a multilaminate array of sheet members of generally rectangular and generally planar shape with main top and bottom surfaces, wherein the sheet members include in sequence in the array a terminal end plate, a first retentate sheet, a first filter sheet, a permeate sheet, a second filter sheet, and a second retentate sheet, and a second terminal end plate, wherein each of the sheet members in the array has at least one inlet basin opening at one end thereof, and at least one outlet basin opening at an opposite end thereof, with at least one permeate passage opening;

¹ Consistent with the holding of *Festo Corp. v. Shoketsu Kinzoku Kogyo Kabushiki Co., Ltd.*, et al., 535 U.S. 722, 152 L.Ed.2d 944 (2002), decided May 28, 2002, any amendments herein that hereafter are deemed to be narrowing amendments by a court of competent jurisdiction in a final unappealed or unappealable decision, are not intended to relinquish any scope of equivalents unforeseeable at the time of this amendment or that relate to aspects of the invention having only a peripheral relation to the basis for the amendment.

each of the first and second retentate sheets having at least one channel opening therein, wherein each channel opening extends longitudinally between the inlet and outlet basin openings of the sheets in the array and is open through the entire thickness of the retentate sheet, and with each of the first and second retentate sheets being bonded to an adjacent filter sheet about peripheral end and side portions thereof, with their basin openings and permeate passage openings in register with one another, and arranged to permit flow of filtrate through the channel openings of the retentate sheet between the inlet and outlet basin openings to permit permeate flow through the filter sheet to the permeate sheet to the permeate passage openings;

wherein each of the filter sheets is secured at its peripheral portions on a face thereof opposite the retentate sheet, to the permeate sheet;

 (b) at least one thin gasket layer bonded to ~~a surface of~~ said filtration cassette on at least the main top and bottom surfaces thereof and forming an integral unitary structure with said filtration cassette, wherein said thin gasket layer comprises an elastomeric material for forming a fluid-tight seal between the filtration cassette and an adjacent structure when engaged therewith, wherein said thin gasket layer has a thickness in a range of from about 0.01 inch to not more than 0.3 inch, and comprises an elastomeric material having a durometer hardness in a range of from about 30 to about 80, wherein the gasket layer on each main top and bottom surfaces of the filtration cassette has openings therein communicating with inlet basin, outlet basin and permeate passage openings of the filtration cassette.

3. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer comprises an elastomeric material having a hardness in the range from about 40 to about 60 durometers.

4. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer has a thickness in the range from about 0.01 inch to about 0.1 inch.

5. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer has a thickness in the range from about 0.02 inch to about 0.06 inch.

6. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer has a temperature resistance at least within the temperature range from about 0°C to about 70°C.

7. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer has a temperature resistance within the temperature range from about -10°C to about 150°C.

8. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer fully encapsulates said filtration cassette.

9. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer partially covers the surface of said filtration cassette.

10. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of silicone, ethylenepropylenedienemonomer (EPDM), viton, polyurethane, polypropylene, polyethylene, polyvinylchloride, polyester, epoxy, ethylvinylacetate, butyl rubber, and styrene butadiene.


11. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer comprises silicone.

12. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer is securely bonded onto the surface of said filtration cassette by a method selected from the group consisting of molding, adhering, welding, and spray coating.

13. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, wherein the thin gasket layer is molded onto the surface of said filtration cassette.

16. (original) The integral filtration cassette structure of claim 1, further comprising a feed material inlet port communicating with said at least one inlet basin opening, and a retentate outlet port communicating with said at least one outlet basin opening, wherein the inlet and outlet ports are diagonally opposite one another on said cassette.

19. (currently amended) An integral gasketed filtration cassette structure comprising:

 a filtration cassette comprising a multilaminate array of sheet members of generally rectangular and generally planar shape with main top and bottom surfaces, wherein the sheet members include in sequence in the array a terminal end plate, a first retentate sheet, a first filter sheet, a permeate sheet, a second filter sheet, and a second retentate sheet, and a second terminal end plate, wherein each of the sheet members in the array has at least one inlet basin opening at one end thereof, and at least one outlet basin opening at an opposite end thereof, with at least one permeate passage opening;

each of the first and second retentate sheets having at least one channel opening therein, wherein each channel opening extends longitudinally between the inlet and outlet basin openings of the sheets in the array and is open through the entire thickness of the retentate sheet, and with each of the first and second retentate sheets being bonded to an adjacent filter sheet about peripheral end and side portions thereof, with their basin openings and permeate passage openings in register with one another, and arranged to permit flow of filtrate through the channel openings of the retentate sheet between the inlet and outlet basin openings to permit permeate flow through the filter sheet to the permeate sheet to the permeate passage openings;

wherein each of the filter sheets is secured at its peripheral portions on a face thereof opposite the retentate sheet, to the permeate sheet;

at least one thin gasket layer bonded to a surface of said filtration cassette and forming an integral unitary structure with said filtration cassette, wherein said thin gasket layer comprises an elastomeric material for forming a fluid-tight seal between the filtration cassette and an adjacent structure when engaged therewith, wherein said thin gasket layer has a thickness of not more than

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0.3 inch, and comprises a silicone material having a durometer hardness in a range of from about 30 to about 80, and wherein said thin gasket layer fully encapsulates said filtration cassette, wherein the gasket layer on each main top and bottom surfaces of the filtration cassette has openings therein communicating with inlet basin, outlet basin and permeate passage openings of the filtration cassette.
